№ 265,533

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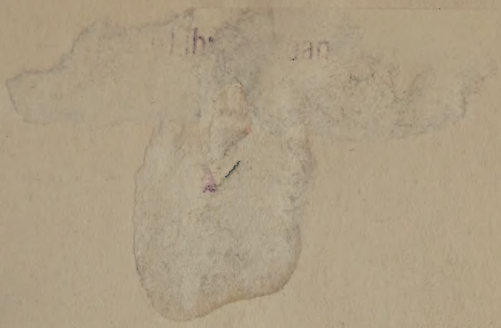
Miss Mary Ladd



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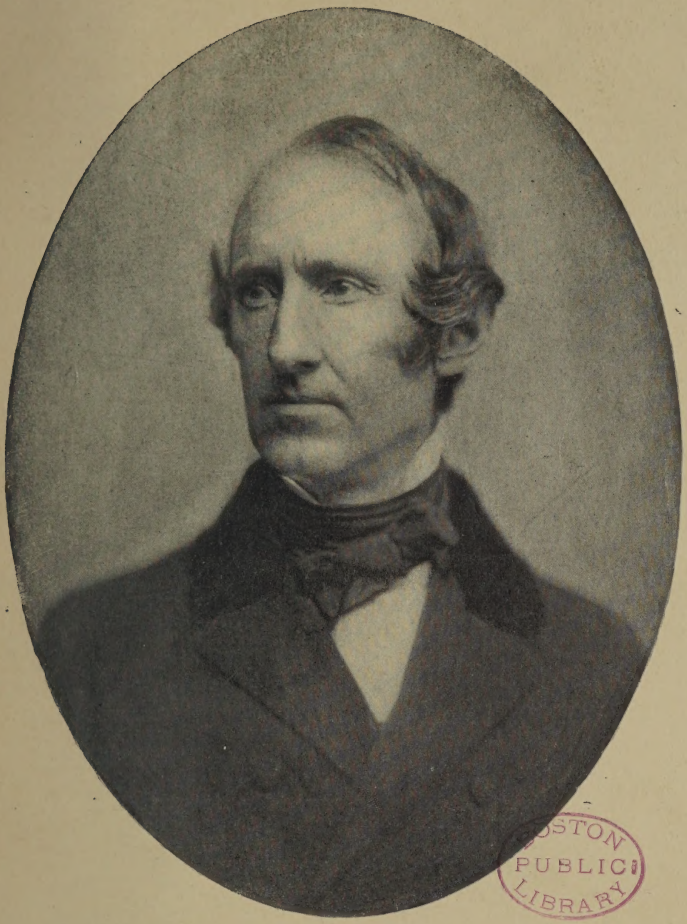

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Wendell Phillips Centenary

1811–1911

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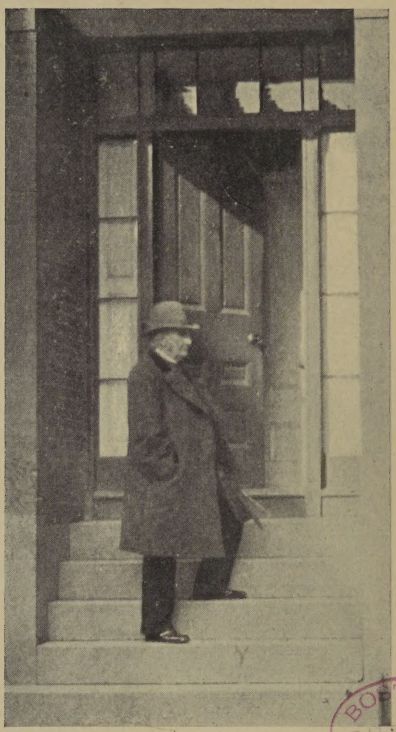
Miss Mary H. Ladd.
Dec. 4. 1911



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WENDELL PHILLIPS

Born November 29, 1811
Died February 2, 1884

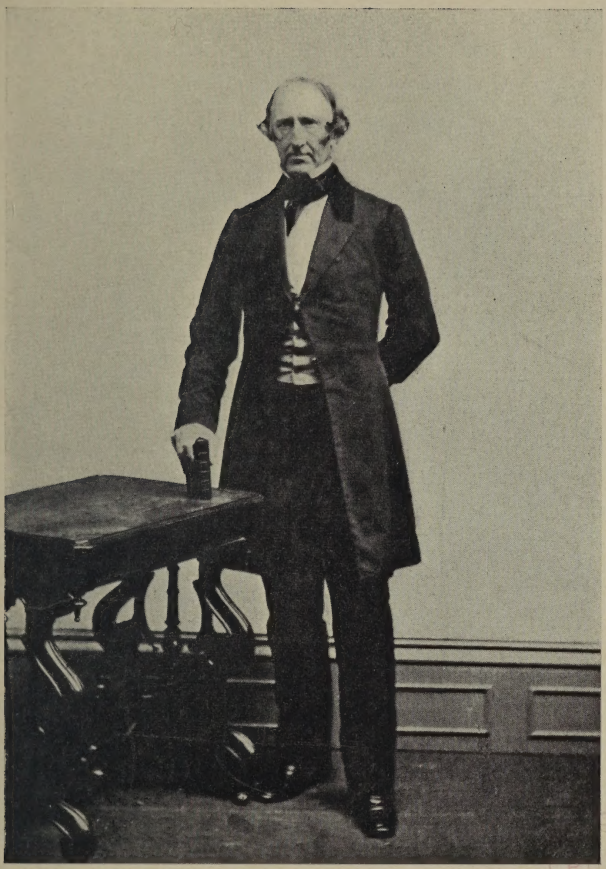
HE stood upon the world's broad threshold; wide
The din of battle and of slaughter rose;
He saw God stand upon the weaker side,
That sank in seeming loss before its foes:
Many there were who made great haste and sold
Unto the cunning enemy their swords,
He scorned their gifts of fame, and power, and gold,
And, underneath their soft and flowery words,
Heard the cold serpent hiss; therefore he went
And humbly joined him to the weaker part,
Fanatic named, and fool, yet well content
So he could be the nearer to God's heart,
And feel its solemn pulses sending blood
Through all the widespread veins of endless good.

J. R. Lowell, 1843

1450

THERE, with one hand behind his back,
Stands PHILLIPS, buttoned in a sack,
Our Attic orator, our Chatham;
Old fogies, when he lightens at 'em,
Shrivel like leaves; to him 'tis granted
Always to say the word that's wanted,
So that he seems but speaking clearer
The tiptoe thought of every hearer;
Each flash his brooding heart lets fall
Fires what's combustible in all,
And sends the applauses bursting in
Like an exploded magazine.
His eloquence no frothy show,
The gutter's street-polluted flow,
No Mississippi's yellow flood
Whose shoalness can't be seen for mud;—
So simply clear, serenely deep,
So silent-strong its graceful sweep,
None measures its unrippling force
Who has not striven to stem its course;
How fare their barques who think to play
With smooth Niagara's mane of spray,
Let Austin's total shipwreck say.

J. R. LOWELL, 1846



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WENDELL PHILLIPS

From a photograph about 1863

WENDELL PHILLIPS was born in the brick mansion built by his father, John Phillips (first Mayor of Boston), on the lower corner of Walnut and Beacon Streets, overlooking Boston Common. After his father's death (1823) he and his mother resided for some years in a dwelling house on the site of the Athenæum, between Beacon Street and the Old Granary Burying Ground.

"He was a thorough Bostonian, too, and his anti-slavery enthusiasm never rose quite so high as when blended with local patriotism. No one who heard it can ever forget the thrilling modulation of his voice when he said, at some special crisis of the anti-slavery agitation,—

"'I love inexpressibly these streets of Boston, over whose pavements my mother held up tenderly my baby feet; and if God grants me time enough, I will make them too pure to bear the footsteps of a slave!'"

T. W. HIGGINSON

BIRTHPLACE OF WENDELL PHILLIPS

IN November, 1841, Mr. and Mrs. Phillips moved into the modest brick house numbered 26 Essex Street, which remained their home for more than forty years. It was of tiny dimensions, barely large enough for the accommodation of themselves and the necessary servants. A dining-room and kitchen were on the first floor. On the second a double parlor of diminutive size, but bright and sunny, made a cheerful study, and above it, on the southern front of the house, was Mrs. Phillips's chamber during her long years of invalidism. From her windows she could look out, during the turbulent winter of 1860–61, upon the crowds (composed of both friends and mobocrats) that followed Mr. Phillips home from his Sunday morning discourses at Music Hall and gathered in a surging mass before the house.

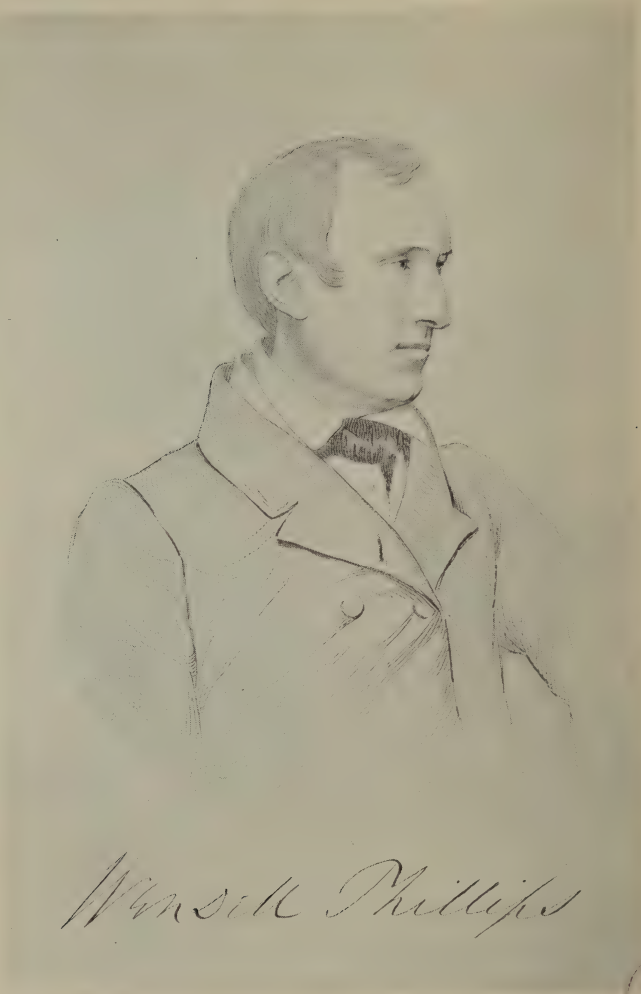
The vignette on the second cover page is reproduced from a photograph (taken in 1882) of Mr. Phillips standing in his doorway — a very characteristic likeness. The front door of the house is now preserved in the Old State House by the Bostonian Society.

The portrait of Mr. Phillips on the front cover page is from a photograph taken about 1859, at the age of forty-eight.

THE HOME OF WENDELL PHILLIPS

26 Essex Street, Boston

(Mr. Phillips is shown just entering the door)



From an etching by J. Andrews, 1845

From a knife-cut portrait made in London in 1839

PUBLIC

THEN began an agitation which for the marvel of its origin, the majesty of its purpose, the earnestness, unselfishness, and ability of its appeals, the vigor of its assault, the deep, national convulsion it caused, the vast and beneficent changes it wrought, and its widespread, indirect influence on all kindred moral questions, is without a parallel in history since Luther.

WENDELL PHILLIPS, at Garrison's funeral, 1879

I claim for the anti-slavery movement that, looking back over its whole course, and considering the men connected with it in the mass, it has been marked by sound judgment, unerring foresight, the most sagacious adaptation of means to ends, the strictest self-discipline, the most thorough research, and an amount of patient and manly argument addressed to the conscience and intellect of the nation, such as no other cause of the kind, in England or this country, has ever offered.

WENDELL PHILLIPS, 1853

(George Thompson, the eloquent English ally of the American abolitionists, thrice visited the United States, in 1834, 1851, and 1864, and was hotly mobbed during his first two visits. On his third visit he witnessed the abolition of slavery and was publicly honored for his unselfish labours.)

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WILLIAM LLOYD GARRISON, GEORGE THOMPSON, and WENDELL PHILLIPS

From a daguerreotype taken in 1851

NONE know what it is to live till they redeem life from its seeming monotony by laying it a sacrifice on the altar of some great cause.

The agitator must stand outside of organization, with no bread to earn, no candidate to elect, no party to save, no object but the truth,— to tear a question open and riddle it with light.

Power, ability, influence, character, virtue, are only trusts with which to serve our time.

The broadest and most far-sighted intellect is utterly unable to foresee the ultimate consequences of any great social change. Ask yourself, on all such occasions, if there be any element of right and wrong in the question, any principle of clear, natural justice that turns the scale. If so, take your part with the perfect and abstract right, and trust God to see that it shall prove the expedient.

WENDELL PHILLIPS

WENDELL PHILLIPS

From a photograph by J. W. Black, about 1875

BOSTON PUBLIC

TO be as good as our fathers we must be better.

We must never allow the siren voice of our tastes to drown the cry of another's necessities.

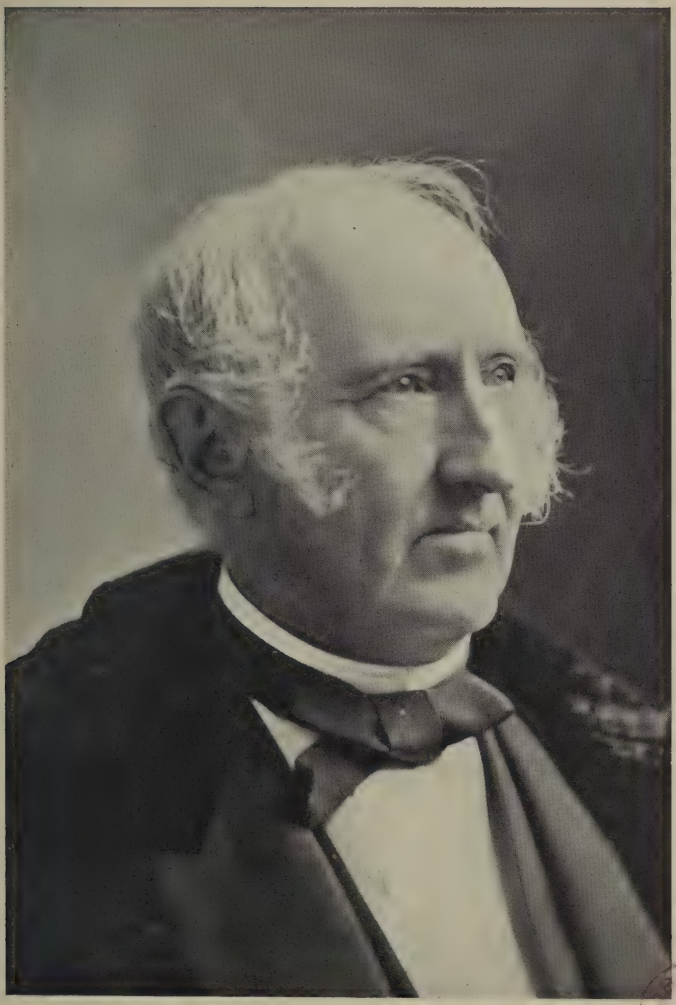
It is safe to leave man with all the rights God gave him.

Labor, the creator of wealth, is entitled to all it creates. Before the movement stops, every child born in America must have an equal chance in life.

While woman is admitted to the gallows, the jail, and the tax list, we have no right to debar her from the ballot box.

Genius can mould no marble so speaking as the spot where a brave man stood or the scene where he labored.

WENDELL PHILLIPS



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WENDELL PHILLIPS

From a photograph by Sarony, about 1880

– Count that day lost whose low descending sun
sees at thy hand no worthy action done –

This completes John Brown
taught to each of his children –

Wm Lloyd Phillips

Boston Apl 8. 1860 –

HERE

WENDELL PHILLIPS RESIDED DURING FORTY YEARS,

DEVOTED BY HIM TO EFFORTS TO SECURE

THE ABOLITION OF AFRICAN SLAVERY IN THIS COUNTRY.

THE CHARMS OF HOME, THE ENJOYMENT OF WEALTH AND LEARNING,
EVEN THE KINDLY RECOGNITION OF HIS FELLOW-CITIZENS,
WERE BY HIM ACCOUNTED AS NAUGHT COMPARED WITH DUTY.

HE LIVED TO SEE JUSTICE TRIUMPHANT, FREEDOM UNIVERSAL,
AND TO RECEIVE THE TARDY PRAISES OF HIS FORMER OPPONENTS.
THE BLESSINGS OF THE POOR, THE FRIENDLESS, AND THE OPPRESSED ENRICHED HIM.

IN BOSTON
HE WAS BORN 29 NOVEMBER, 1811, AND DIED 2 FEBRUARY, 1884.

This Tablet was Erected in 1894, by Order of the City Council of Boston.

BOSTON

Tablet on site of Essex Street house

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